

Supporting the Family First Transition and Support Act of 2019 (HR 2702)

Los Angeles County (County) is committed to protecting children and strengthening families by investing in upfront prevention services, providing comprehensive support tailored to meet the unique needs of families, and ensuring the successful implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First). In recent years, the County has endeavored to reform its child welfare system through the statewide Continuum of Care Reform (CCR), but reform is constrained by the antiquated federal rule that limits federal foster care support to children removed from very low-income families. Specifically, in 1996, the welfare reform law tied foster care eligibility with an income test based on standards from the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (a now-defunct cash assistance program), with no cost of living adjustment. That means that today, if an abused child comes from a family of four with income more than just \$10,296, (the income limit in California in 1996), their foster family would not be eligible for federal support.

Although Family First reformed child welfare funding by allowing federal Title IV-E reimbursement for specified child abuse prevention services, there is other critical federal reform on the horizon. On May 8, 2019, the Family First Transition and Support Act of 2019 (S. 1376) was introduced by Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Amy

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MOTION

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Klobuchar (D-MN), and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY). This bi-partisan legislation would increase federal funding for child welfare and provide time-limited federal support for the implementation of Family First. Additionally, S. 1376 would eliminate the inequitable income eligibility standard for children placed in foster care. On May 14, 2019, the Board of Supervisors approved a motion to send five-signature letters in support of S. 1376.

Congressmember Karen Bass (D-CA) has since introduced the Family First Transition and Support Act of 2019 (H.R. 2702) in the House of Representatives. The legislation is co-authored by Congressmembers Debra Haaland (D-NM), Don Bacon (R-NE), Brenda Lawrence (D-MI), and Jim Langevin (D-RI). As companion legislation to S. 1376, H.R. 2702 would strengthen the federal foster care safety net by eliminating the income eligibility standard and provide resources and support to families involved in the child welfare system. Among other vital provisions that would support states and counties implementing Family First, H.R. 2702 would expand the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program, authorized under Title IV-B of the Social Security Act, to include Kinship Placement Support Services to preserve kin placements and prevent the entry or re-entry of children into foster care.

This legislation signals the original co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth and Congressmember Debra Haaland's unwavering support and commitment to foster youth.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

- 1) Direct the Chief Executive Office to send a five-signature letter to the members of Los Angeles County's Congressional Delegation and Senate and House Leadership expressing the County's strong support of H.R. 2702 to fully realize the improvements made by Family First and provide critically needed child welfare funding reform by eliminating the lookback provision that has resulted in the steady decrease in Federal funding for child welfare.

- 2) Direct the Chief Executive Office to send a five-signature letter to the authors of H.R. 2702, expressing the County's strong support of H.R. 2702 and thanking them for their leadership on this important issue.

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